

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION PERFORMANCE THROUGH
EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT IN UAE SMART GOVERNMENT

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the spirit of my mother

and

To my father

You have successfully made me the person I am today

You will always be remembered



PTTAUTHM
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate impact of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership on employees' innovation and creativity and employees' empowerment. Over the past decades, employees have become an organiser in coordinating work within organisation. This trend creates new challenges for leaders as they are expected to innovate individual employees and to improve their creativity simultaneously. This study proposes a conceptual framework for understanding leadership styles and employees' empowerment to individual employee which would influence innovation and creativity. The conceptual framework includes employees' empowerment and support for innovation as mediating variables in the effect of leadership styles on employees' innovation and creativity. The study also validates the proposed conceptual framework using a second-order confirmatory factor analysis technique, namely, structural equations modeling, with the data collected from 597 employees of four e-Government organisations in the UAE. The findings suggest that transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership has significant positive impact on employees' innovation and creativity. Moreover, employees' empowerment has partial mediation effect in the relationship between leadership styles and employees' innovation and creativity. This study contributes to the research that identifies employees' innovation and creativity influenced by transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership that can affect employee performance, particularly in the context of UAE-based e-Government organisations.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji secara empirik kesan kepemimpinan transformasi, transaksional dan *laissez-faire* ke atas inovasi dan kreativiti pekerja serta pemeraksanaan pekerja. Sepanjang dekad yang lalu, pekerja telah menjadi pengurus dalam menjalankan kerja dalam organisasi. Trend ini mencetuskan cabaran baru untuk pemimpin kerana mereka dijangka menginovasikan setiap pekerja dan pada masa yang sama meningkatkan kreativiti mereka. Kajian ini mencadangkan rangka kerja konseptual untuk memahami gaya kepemimpinan dan pemeraksanaan pekerja kepada setiap pekerja individu yang akan mempengaruhi inovasi dan kreativiti mereka. Rangka konseptual termasuk pemeraksanaan pekerja untuk menyokong inovasi sebagai pembolehubah diantara gaya kepemimpinan dan inovasi serta kreativiti pekerja. Kajian ini juga mengesahkan kerangka konseptual yang dicadangkan menggunakan teknik analisis faktor konfirmasi tahap kedua, iaitu persamaan struktur struktur, dengan data yang dikumpulkan dari 597 pengikut dari empat organisasi kerajaan elektronik di UAE. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa kepemimpinan transformasi, transaksional dan *laissez-faire* mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap inovasi dan kreativiti pekerja. Tambahan pula, pemeraksanaan pekerja mempunyai kesan pengantaraan separa dalam hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan dan inovasi serta kreativiti pekerja. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada penyelidikan yang mengenal pasti inovasi dan kreativiti pekerja dipengaruhi oleh kepemimpinan transformasi, transaksional dan *laissez-faire* yang boleh mempengaruhi prestasi pekerja, terutamanya dalam konteks organisasi kerajaan elektronik d

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	-	Analysis of Moment Structure
AGFI	-	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
CES	-	Consumption Emotions Set
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
CR	-	Composite Reliability
CR	-	Critical Ratio
DES	-	Differential Emotion Scale
DF	-	Degree of Freedom
EFA	-	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ML	-	Maximum Likelihood
NFI	-	Normed Fit Index
GFI	-	Goodness-of-Fit Index
RMSEA	-	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
SE	-	Standard Error
SD	-	Standard Deviation
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Science
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
PAD	-	Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background, problem statement and also existing research questions and objectives. Moreover, it also highlights the contributions, significance and scope of the study. This chapter ends with a summary.

The organisation in the UAE evolve frequent due to the pressure of worldwide competition carried out by forces like social and economic, the new and rapidly fast era of information technology, the reputation in developing economies, and service offerings in line with the growing expectations of customers (Darmaki & Rashed, 2015; Almheiri. 2015; Al Wahshi, 2016; Farouk, Elanain & Obeidat, 2016). In this new era of global competition, the organisations in Abu Dhabi provide more authentic services (Murawwi *et al.*, 2014). Researchers identified that innovation is a serious element if organisation practitioners are to react efficiently to challenges faced in markets and remain in competition (Fraj, Matute & Melero, 2015; Kindström, Kowalkowski & Sandberg, 2013). Innovation contributes to the organisation's financial performance (Dekoulou & Trivellas, 2017), sales growth and market value (Coad, Segarra & Teruel, 2016); it enhances customer loyalty and satisfaction (Koo Moon & Choi, 2014; Enz, 2012), and sustains a competitive advantage (Fores & Camison, 2016).

In any organisation employees ability, variety of skills and knowledge are considered as the main sources of innovation, which help to generate new and useful ideas (Anderson, Potocnik & Zhou, 2014; Slatten, Svensson & Svaeri, 2011; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). Moreover, individual innovation also contributes significantly to organisational performance and growth (Colbert *et al.*, 2014; Kattara & El-Said 2013; Brunswicker & Vanhaverbeke, 2015; Unsworth & Parker 2003).

Hallowell, Bowen & Knoop (2016) discuss that employees are considered as the heart of revolution and change within the organisation for their acute role as the ambassadors of organisation. Although frameworks in research and different findings diverge to some extent, numerous researchers have established that for organisational success and effectiveness, the vital role of employees' creativity and innovation are important (Hogan & Coote, 2014; Nagy 2014; Ottenbacher, 2007).

Employees' creativity and innovation as complex products of interaction between person and situation in an organisation is of utmost significant (Chenhall & Moers, 2015; Joo, McLean & Yang, 2013; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2014). Several variables such as leadership styles, organisational support and climate have been recognised as reasons of creativity and innovation (Jaiswal, RL Dhar, 2015; Wallace *et al.*, 2016; Ngo, 2015; West & Sacramento 2012). Leadership styles are considered as a significant organisational related concept, found to be in supporting of employees' creative activities (Morianio *et al.*, 2014). In view of the continuous variations enforced by competition worldwide, it is probable that the achievement and competitiveness of organisations are influenced by the ability of managers to encourage innovation in their build teams and also within organisations (Wallace *et al.*, 2016).

Employees' creativity and innovation promote the achievements of any organisation (Wallace *et al.*, 2016). Organisational leaders encourage the maximum level of creativity among their employees which can prompt innovation and resulted in satisfactory job performance (Shanker & Bhanugopan, 2017). Eisenberger, Malone and Presson (2016) finds that employee innovation is based on how creative employees are with the way their organisations work. Employees' creativity and innovation signify their feelings and sense towards their organisations in addition to how they are affected by leadership styles (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Hence, emerging a high level of leadership skills means developing innovative culture within in organisation (Kim & Yoon, 2015). Execution of leadership in an organisation is essential for motivating employees and attaining their organisational goals (Kataria, Garg & Rastogi, 2012). However, numerous studies have shown the gaps stay alive regarding leadership styles and how they can affect employees' creativity and innovation (Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Renko *et al.*, 2015; Eyal & Roth, 2011).

In spite of the past research that leadership with styles is an important forecaster of employees' creativity and innovation, very few researches have been discovered broadly on the impression of leadership styles for creativity and innovation

(Oeij *et al.*, 2017; Gupta & Singh 2014). The considerable past few years' research has focused mainly on quantitative testing existing leadership theories and instruments (Frisch & Huppenbauer, 2014; Qu, Janssen & Shi 2015). Yet, studying associations of leadership styles, creativity and innovation have discovered the construct of leadership styles related to creativity and innovation impact on these relationships (Hao, He & Long, 2018; Herrmann & Felfe 2013). However, Erkutlu and Chafra (2015) claim that it is not the only way that leaders do to raise spirits of employees' creativity and innovation. It is a complex multi-factor phenomenon which needs more examination and more broad research is desired to improve understanding of leadership styles scenario towards the creativity and innovativeness of employees (Anderson, Potocnik & Zhou, 2014). Yukl (2009) also highlights several studies that are necessary to explore on how leadership styles affect innovation in the organisation. Therefore, this study seeks to explore leadership styles and its features required for encouraging employees' creativity and innovation.

Existing literature exposed the relationships between leadership styles, creativity and innovation that have been considered in two overall research settings including experimental studies with student participants and field research with employees and supervisors respondents (Anderson *et al.*, 2014). According to Ersar and Naktiyok 2014, using a sample of 364 university students in U.S. recognised only a slight effect of transformational leadership on personal creativity. This study observes the influence of leadership styles on employees' creativity and innovation in a real world setting involving employees and leaders.

Furthermore, a researcher must consider that employees are a vital variable within an organisation when using a theoretical model. Changes in leadership styles probably also have a positive influence on employees' performance (Ersar & Naktiyok, 2014). A study by Carmeli, Dutton and Hardin (2015), find a positive relationship between employees' creativity and how leaders manage existing changes. Having the suitable leadership skills is a necessity for employees to be efficient in their role within organisation (DuBrin, 2015).

The impact of other factors on the relationship of leadership styles and employees' creativity might be the cause of diverse findings (FC Tung, 2016). According to literature, various factors such as individual and organisational impact leadership styles on employees' behaviour (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017; Wang *et al.* 2017; Jaiswal & Dhar 2015). Similarly, the relationship between transformational leadership

and employee creativity is mediated by both empowerment and creative role identity which can moderate the effect of leadership on innovation of employees (Wang, Tsai & Tsai 2014).

This study considers how employees' empowerment supports organisational level innovation and improve the relationship between leadership styles and employees' creativity and innovation. Employees' empowerment is influenced by the employees' creativity (A Khalili, 2016), in similar way the supportive employees' empowerment enhances employees' creativity and innovation (McCleskey, 2014; Ren & Zhang 2015; Wang, Tsai & Tsai, 2014). The impact of leadership on employees' creativity is durable when the environment for innovation is higher (Chen and Hou, 2016). Employees' empowerment is a factor directly or indirectly related to creativity and innovation (Henker, Sonnentag & Unger, 2015; Hoch, 2013). Employees of an organisation who encourage initiative respond favorably and efficiently to leaders that boost innovation (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). The key determination of this study is to discover how leadership styles and employees' empowerment affect employees' creativity and innovation. The findings of the study will contribute towards theory and practice of how employees' creativity and innovation can be improved in the organisations of Abu Dhabi.

1.2 Problem Statment

In today's highly competitive environment, satisfying both innovation and creativity are critical in an organisation. Jindal and Gupta (2016) emphasise that the success of any organisation in this competitive world depends on its workforce innovation and empowered employees. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) recognised 2017 as the year of innovation where many successful endeavours were performed in creating awareness programs, workshops, seminars, conferences, forums and debates all in the name of innovation (Moonesar *et al.*, 2019). A particular focus is on the Emirate with an ongoing goal to create and innovate within the public sector. The sudden interest and drive for innovation became one of the many vital dimensions within UAE to fill the gap in improving government systems due to increasing affluence and expectations; creating a sense that government and public services are locked into current models; the need for creating new ideas and public value; and creating

opportunities for showcasing and utilising technology efficiently and effectively (Moonesar & Mourtada, 2015). An ever-increasing focus has also been dedicated in understanding how collaborations in the form of creativity and innovation can be a source of employees' empowerment in government services (Ahrens *et al.*, 2017). As a country, UAE has recognised that innovation is essential in improving quality of life, increasing economic diversification, enhancing knowledge economy, improving competitiveness, creating high skilled jobs and promoting employees' empowerment but still lacking in identifying model to achieve the goals (Moonesar *et al.*, 2019; UAE NIS, 2015). Therefore, innovation is key to promoting economic growth, increasing competitiveness and providing new job opportunities.

Numerous researchers reflect that the consideration of leadership styles is an important element in persuading functions within an organisation (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Moriano *et al.*, 2014; Mulki, Caemmerer & Heggde, 2015; Colbert, Barrick & Bradley, 2014). Leadership styles are specified with three different leadership styles such as: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (Atmojo, 2015).

Among the world's finest economies, UAE is ranked 54th. However, its innovation efficiency or its success in transforming the innovation enablers into innovative outputs is ranked low at 126th in the world (Tolica *et al.*, 2015). Thus, while UAE has made many investments over the last few years in improving its innovation capabilities, care needs to be taken to ensure that these investments lead to actual innovative outputs (Iqbal, 2011).

Dobni and Klassen (2015) specify that the main function of leadership management is aimed to manage employees' creativity and innovation in a determination to extend the eventual aims for employees' forceful job participation and the commitment to organisations. A study of Tung (2016) suggests that the complete organisation environment which consists of leadership styles, employees' creativity and innovation can affect the performance of organisation.

Several studies were found in literature examining the leadership behaviour of the executives in organisation under the content of theoretical and operational models (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Muenjohn & McMurray, 2014), but there are few evidence found in literature investigating the conceivable impacts of leadership styles on the creativity and innovation of employees in an organisation (Rauniyar, Ding & Rauniyar, 2017). This is reflective towards the organisations in Abu Dhabi. Hence,

this study will make an effort to examine the relationship between leadership styles and employees' creativity and innovation.

Leadership extends beyond management which can improve the outcomes in an organisation (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). The role of management is to involve consuming accessible resources to achieve the aim within an organisation but the quality of true leadership involves how employees can be determined to attain goals (Rauniyar, Ding & Rauniyar, 2017). This is the major reason that the involvement of leadership is thought to be the best approach suited to a level of determination in employees to achieve the identified goals (Mayberry, 2015). Kolak (2010) examines that prominent management styles contain autocratic, consultative, persuasive and democratic. These styles are reliant on the organisation's objectives, mission, and vision (Franklin, 2016). This study sought to understand how leadership styles affect the creativity and innovation of employees within an organisation.

The role of leadership in the success of quality initiatives has been highlighted by many authors (Romanowski, 2017; Rao & Kareem, 2015). Yet, few studies have been conducted to investigate the leadership styles that support quality implementation. Literature have proposed that transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles are needed to ensure a successful innovative behaviour within organisation in UAE (Jabeen, Behery & Abu, 2015).

Transformational leaderships have been a popular research topic for the last decades. Research on this topic has produced ample evidence that transformational leadership enhances performance of organisation in UAE (Masa'deh, Obeidat & Tarhini, 2016; El Amouri & O'Neill, 2014). Studies on transformational and transactional leadership, however, have focused on objective performance measures such as sales volume, profit margin and stock product performance (Behery & Al-Nasser, 2016; Bealer & Bhanugopan, 2014), in addition to employees' satisfaction and commitment to their organisations (Hater and Bass, 1988; Barling *et al.* 2000). There are few studies that addressed transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership with regards to innovation and creativity in UAE.

A variety of leadership styles may produce different effects on employees within an organisation (Wang, Tsai & Tsai, 2014). Leadership styles used in organisational settings are intended to motivate the employees who will be keen about their performance in the organisation towards creativity (Keskes, 2014). Similarly, creativity is an important factor for employees which affects their performance and the

organisation (Malik & Butt, 2017). Creativity and innovation are the forces that drive employees to achieve their aims (Anderson, Potočnik, Zhou , 2014). Employees' creativity and innovation include the factors that drive them to do their best for organisation (Sarooghi, Libaers & Burkemper, 2015). Creativity and innovation are important variables in supporting employees' satisfaction and performance (Rego *et al.*, 2014). This study examines employees' preferences concerning organisational leadership styles and measure whether variances exist among organisations in Abu Dhabi.

According to Wang, Tsai and Tsai (2014), leadership with its different styles is apparent and appreciated by numerous stakeholders as a main component of achievement and a distinguishing factor along with convincing influence on the attainment of aims in organisations. It is essential to endorse a suitable organisational environment through good connection between employees and leaders. One of the main aims for organisations is to retain the finest talents in an extremely challenging business environment. The study of Nazari and Emami (2012) suggest that there is always a need to think on leadership with its styles for development.

Abbasi *et al.*, (2012) emphasise that innovation and creativity are achieved through leadership transforming employees to more empower. Without empowerment, employees would have lack of confident and creativity, which lead to the provision of poor quality services. Lakew (2011) asserts that there is still a need in the UAE to develop an employee empowerment model regardless of the quality of services offered. According to the Oxford Business Group UAE Country Report (2015), the UAE organisation is the largest in the Middle East region, but lacks innovation and creativity due to low employee empowerment which likely results in increased poor leadership and absence of innovation.

Conversely, the studies in leadership styles (e.g. Wong & Laschinger, 2013; Rego *et al.*, 2013; Alok, 2014) seek to find an understanding for this issue and its influence on organisations and its employees. The sense that leadership is most vital in organisations indicates that it can help its associates to bind themselves to work and encourage a good social environment and good relationships between leaders and employees (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The study of Ilies *et al.* (2005) argue that leaders will try for good and meaningful relationships among their supporters and this direction will have various positive outputs. This study keeps on the same path of exploration, as it presents how views on leadership styles have an effective impression

on employees' attitudes and how these attitudes can be effective for their creativity and performance.

Among the various factors that influence innovation and creativity of employees are the employees' empowerment and leadership styles (McFarlane & Tetrick, 1994; Middlemiss, 2011; Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). This research attempts to investigate the impact of the leadership styles i.e. transformational, transactional and laissez-faire on employees' innovation and creativity mediated by employees' empowerment and leadership styles which highly commended by Western academics and practitioners (Birasnav *et al.*, 2011). This study is among the first to consider employees' empowerment as a mediator between the leadership styles, innovation and creativity of employees in the UAE context.

1.3 Research Questions

The key question of this research is, what contributes to particular leadership styles and employees' empowerment related to employees' creativity and innovation in Abu Dhabi? Nevertheless, there are few specific questions as follows:

- i. What is the relationship of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire, leadership styles and employees' creativity in Smart Government in Abu Dhabi?
- ii. Do the relationship of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire, leadership style and employees' innovation in Smart Government in Abu Dhabi?
- iii. Do the employees' empowerment mediating the influence of leadership styles on employees' creativity in Smart Government.
- iv. Do the employees' empowerment mediating the influence of leadership styles on employee's innovation in Smart Government Abu Dhabi?

1.4 Research Objectives

The major objective of this study is to take part in focusing on personal and organizational aspects to attain more complete knowledge of the factors that may

encourage employees' creativity and innovation. However, there are few specific objectives as follows:

- i. To examine the relationships of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles and employees' creativity in Smart Government in Abu Dhabi.
- ii. To determine the relationship of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles and employees' innovation in Smart Government in Abu Dhabi.
- iii. To assess the employees' empowerment mediates the influence of leadership styles on employees' creativity in Smart Government in Abu Dhabi.
- iv. To evaluate the employees' empowerment mediates the influence of leadership styles on employees' innovation in Smart Government Abu Dhabi.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in various ways. Firstly, it shows the relationship between styles of leadership towards creativity and innovation of the Abu Dhabi e-Government since this specific nature of study has not been explored previously. Consequently, the results will be more effective for leaders to create awareness within organisational setup to get the most determinant factors that can produce impact on the creativity and innovation of their employees.

Secondly, this study adds to the contribution of knowledge in other leadership and employees' creativity and innovation studies. This study is also supporting those who desire to conduct more studies in similar context and also for organisations facing similar problems.

Moreover, this study becomes an emergent body of research on different styles of leadership styles and employees' creativity and innovation through the inspection of three essential leadership styles and their impact on employees' creativity and innovation. The study shows that it has confidence by adding value in literature on leadership styles, especially in the e-Government of Abu Dhabi since limited literature was done on similar setting.

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